

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A programmable recorder that records video signals provided by a settop box includes monitoring circuitry which monitors a signal indicative of the operational state of the settop box and  
5 generates a state signal, logic circuitry which determines whether the settop box is operational based on the state signal and generates a determination signal, and control circuitry which effects a programmed response in response to the determination signal. If desired, the programmed response is cancellation of a schedule recording event. In an exemplary case, the programmable recorder includes an alarm circuit; thus, the programmed response is providing an alarm indicating that the  
10 settop box is not operational. In another exemplary case, the programmable recorder includes a communications circuit permitting communication between the programmable recorder and a settop box control facility, and the programmed response consists of transmitting an electronic message to settop box control facility indicating that the settop box is not operational. A memory storing computer readable instructions for permitting the programmable recorder to effect the monitoring and programmed responses and a corresponding signal are also described.  
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